

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Taguchi et al.* (JP 7- 272672).

Claim 18 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1 and 3-14 are allowed.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have canceled claim 15 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 16-18 have been amended by this amendment. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-14, and 16-18 are currently pending.

The Disposition of the Claims

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claim 1 and 3-14 as noted at the Office Action Summary, and the Examiner's indication that claim 18 is allowable if rewritten in independent form as noted at paragraph 4 of the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants have rewritten claim 18 in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim without altering the intended scope of the originally filed claim 18. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 is now in condition for allowance.

In addition, to expedite the prosecution, Applicants have canceled claim 15 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) moot. Further, Applicants have amended claims 16-17 to depend from claim 18. Accordingly, it

is respectfully submitted that claims 16-17 are also allowable at least because of their dependence of claim 18. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 16-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited. Should there remain any questions or comments regarding this response or the application in general, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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